WILLIS ON ELY CATHEDRAL.

At the time that the Archæological Institute visited Ely, we gave some views of the cathedral, and alluded briefly to the lecture which Professor Willis delivered there.* *The Norfolk Chronicle*, a well-conducted paper, gave last week a full report of this lecture, and mentioned, *en passant*, that the ceiling of the north transept is undergoing the process of repainting, after a new design. It will be divided into forty-eight compartments, but only one of these is at present finished. It is well executed; but the patterns are too minute in their details of figures and ornaments to be properly appreciated at the great altitude at which they present themselves to the eye of the spectator.

After commenting on the octagon lantern, the professor said:—This church had, in addition to the great cross, or transept, a western transept, occupying the extreme western end. This was a magnificent introduction,—a kind of hall,—to this lofty church. This kind of transept was not often found. At Peterborough there was an example of it, and another existed at St. Edmund's Bury. Only a part of this transept now existed; the northern wing was either pulled down or fell down, at what period was not known, history having left no trace of it; but there was evidence, that up to the Reformation the transept existed, and was then perfect. At the intersection of the western transept with the nave, was a lofty tower, built by Bishop Ridel. At the period immediately following the Norman conquest such towers were common; some remained at Canterbury; and the cathedrals were flanked with towers of different magnitude, like the churches we see on the banks of the Rhine. On entering this cathedral, they found themselves in a porch, or portico, of the old English period, called the Galilee;† that was the name it was mentioned by in the ancient records. A building at the western end of Durham Cathedral was also called a Galilee: why, he could not tell. Various opinions had been given by writers on ecclesiastical architecture as to the *unde derivatur* of this term, as applied to such porches; but they were conflicting and unsatisfactory.‡ A Saxon church early stood here. The first Norman abbot, Simeon, built an entirely new conventual church, and the monks removed from the old to the new one. This abbot Simeon was brother to Walkelyn, bishop of Winchester.§ He began to erect the church soon after the cathedral at Winchester was commenced; and there are many resemblances between the two edifices, especially in the triforium, and the clerestory. There is the same boldness of design pervading the two cathedrals,—and they serve as a key to assist in forming a history of church architecture in this country. Abbot Simeon only completed as much of the church as was required for the performance of Divine service.—The nave was completed before 1174: it was protected by a timber roof covered on the outside with lead, but left unceiled within; notwithstanding this want of interior finish, the circular arcades had a grand effect. The choir was originally under the tower, or to the west of it. It was at first called the presbytery, because priests only entered it; it was then set apart for such of the monks as sung the service; and it afterwards became the fashion to get room for the choir to the east of the transepts, and to leave the transepts clear for chapels, &c. As the first object of the founders was to erect so much of the building only as was sufficient to carry on the service, they had leisure to take what steps were most conducive to finish it; and as they obtained the offerings of the pious, the design was carried out with increased magnificence; the devout public was also attracted to subscribe, and thus money was obtained for its completion.

Coming to the western transept, they found the pointed arch introduced. This part of the building was evidently erected when the pointed arch began to come in, before the florid pointed arch was introduced; it was not till some time after the pointed arch came in, that it received its appropriate capital, shafts, and mouldings. If they recollected, that Bishop Ridel, who built the tower, occupied the see from 1174 to 1189, they would have a pretty good notion of when the pointed arch came in. Bishop Eustachius, about 1200, built the spacious and elegant vestibule, to which reference had already been made under the appellation of the Galilee. The presbytery now occupied by the present choir, was built by Bishop Northwold, who must, for that purpose, have taken down the *apse*, or circular end of the original church. It was finished in seventeen years. This part completed, the next thing was the destruction of the original church, in 1235; during Bishop Northwold's episcopacy, the object of doing so was to provide a more fitting shrine for the relics of Etheldreda, Withburga, and other Saxon saints; and it was evident, that this shrine was placed in the middle of the works, behind the high altar. It was placed in the extreme eastern end, as being the holiest. That it was so was boldly asserted by the medieval writers. Matthew Paris, speaking of St. Alban's, said, that the shrine was placed at the east end, because the "more to the east, the more holy." In 1321, an accident happened by the fall of the central tower, which was described as standing on four piers. It fell to the east, and destroyed all that part of the church; and had to be cleared away, and rebuilt. Allan de Walsingham, at that time sacrist (afterwards prior of the monastery) a man of high repute for mechanical knowledge and skill, was the architect; and the idea occurred to him, that by forming an octagon, and placing the weight upon the eight piers, instead of four, all future danger from accidents might be avoided: instead therefore, of the usual square tower, we have here one of octagonal form, surmounted by a glazed lantern, of wonderful lightness and symmetrical beauty. Sir Christopher Wren had taken the idea of the Cupola at St. Paul's from the way in which this octagon lantern was supported. The lecturer said, that, it being found, that, if the roof of the octagon was made of stone, it would be too heavy, a wooden roof was put on. This was the work of Allan de Walsingham [between 1321 and 1341]; and they knew from the records he had left, how much even the rope cost by which the painter was suspended, who painted the central boss. The stonework of the octagon was erected from the resources of the convent, and he supposed from the contributions of the faithful. A portion of the work beyond was carried on by Bishop Hotham [1316 to 1337]. It was usual, that a part should be done by the bishop, and a part by the prior and the convent.

The two chapels of Bishop Alcock and Bishop West, are at the extremity of the choir, the former on the north, the latter to the south of the communion table. That of Bishop Alcock, who was the founder of Jesus College, Cambridge, is full of floridly-ornamented tabernacle-work, with niches, for the statues of saints and angels; and was begun about 1488. Bishop West's chapel is of later date [between 1515 and 1544.] That, also, is a work of elegant workmanship, full of numerous niches, exquisitely carved,—which had formerly been occupied by statues.

The Lady or St. Mary's chapel, on the north-west side of the choir, is a monument of architectural splendour coeval with the reign of Edward III. It is now used as a parish church, and called Trinity Church. The stone seats continue round the floor of the edifice. The canopies over these, which consist of an ogee head, of remarkable elegance, much radiated, and inclining forward, are striking objects in this place. These seats are surmounted by ogee arches, which are divided by a spandril pier, making two seats under each arch.

MURAL PAINTINGS.—Extensive remains of paintings have been discovered in the old church of Catherington, Hants.

ORIENTATION OF CHURCHES.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Colonel Mason, will probably excuse me if I prefer the reasoning of Professor Donaldson to his own upon this point, with the practical inconvenience and questionable origin of which he appears to be unacquainted. Even assuming with him that it originated with the Christian religion, and distinguished its votaries from the surrounding heathen, that surely is but a poor argument for rendering it obligatory upon us to whom no such reason could be apparent, even though it once existed. Such a practice partakes far more of the character of a blind and superstitious adherence to an ancient but unmeaning, and therefore irrational observance, than of the service of an intelligent follower of the simple doctrines of the Reformation.

But so far from the orientation of churches or of worship, distinguishing "the Christian from the heathen," it requires but little evidence to shew that the former actually adopted it from the latter, who practised it long before the commencement of our present era. Certainly the Christians did not borrow the idea from the Jew, who always prayed towards Jerusalem in whatever quarter he might be, the origin doubtless of the custom of turning towards Mecca inculcated on the followers of Mahomed. And whatever the aspect of Solomon's temple, its prototype reared by Moses in the Wilderness, had its entrance on the east side, and consequently the Holy of Holies at the west, as clearly seen in the description of it given in Exodus xxvii. But the beautiful sentiment contained in the words of Catullus, *exorientem auroram forte salutans*, and so prevalent in the Greek and Roman poets, seems to have pervaded the religion of the nations of antiquity. Probably it had its origin in the most primitive and simple system of false religion, the Magian, the rites of which were conducted upon the highest hills and addressed to fire or the heavenly bodies, and whose votaries naturally acquired a veneration for the east, from whence, as Dionysius observes, when speaking on this subject, the sun, moon, and all the stars commence their courses. At all events, if the Scholiast on Pindar, and Clemens Alexandrinus are to be credited, it was usual for the Greeks as well as the Romans to turn their faces towards the east when addressing the gods; and Dionysius and Livy inform us that the Roman Augur in waiting for the omen, turned himself towards the same quarter. With this agree the directions given by Vitruvius in book iv., chap. 5, for the aspect of temples, where he observes, that if nothing prevent, the temple should be so arranged, that the image within may look towards the west, *uti qui adierint ad aram immolantes, aut sacrificia facientes, spectent ad partem cæli orientis et simulacrum*.

As then this orientation was prevalent with the heathen, may we not suspect that before A.D. 390, sixty years after the destruction or conversion of pagan temples by Constantine, the Christian churches had adopted an *innocent* custom which they found existing; and that it is to the Crusaders rather than the primitive Christians, that we are to ascribe the reason that in later days has been given for this practice in the west of Europe?

I am, Sir, &c.

WM. WILLMER POCOCK.

Brompton, Oct. 16th, 1847.

'STEEPLE JACK' EXCELLETH HIMSELF AT PERTH.—The kite, cord, and rope scheme having failed at Perth, where Wright had engaged to remove, repair, and replace the vanes of the city churches,—'Steeple Jack' was nevertheless determined not to be outdone even by himself. He therefore procured a stout though slender pole, 15 feet in length, and a rope, which he thus managed to stretch out of the belfry window of one of the spires, and loop over one after another of a series of accidental projections, in the shape of copper spikes, in four tiers, about 15 feet above one another; mounting by aid of the rope to each little projection in succession, whence he hoisted his pole, and hooped his rope, and mounted again, 'like a squirrel,' until he reached the vane,—and all, it seems, 'for a trifle,'—nay for a fraction of the 'trifling sum' for which he offered to 'bring down' all the 'weather cocks' in the city.

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* See p. 474, p. 504, p. 508. Last week, too, we gave an engraving of a curious doorway recently discovered there: p. 489.

† See our engraving, p. 474, ante.

‡ Mutford Church, Suffolk, has a large porch attached to it, resembling that at Ely—only, of course, much smaller, and also called "Galilee." The Rev. Alfred Suckling, in his "History of Suffolk," says, "In early ages there was always a Galilee attached to every church, in which public penitents were stationed, and the bodies of the dead occasionally deposited before interment. The name is supposed to have been appended to those external porches because, as Galilee was the part of Palestine most remote from Jerusalem, so this portion of the building was most distant from the sanctuary." In referring to Shepherd's "Supplement to Headham's Ely," we find the following additional illustration of the term:—"When the two *Marys* visited the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection, they were told by the angels, 'He is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him.' The last station where the bishop and clergy terminated their procession on Easter Sunday was called the *Galilee*, as denoting that Christ, after his resurrection, preceded his disciples into Galilee. It appears from Du Cange, that the term in question was applied to the portico on the outside of the church." Mr. Stevenson here mentioned (after of Mr. Seth Stevenson, one of the present proprietors of *The Norfolk Chronicle*) was the first person who imported any large quantity of ancient painted glass from the continent, and so aided the revival of the art in England.

§ Walkelyn, bishop of Winchester, was the first Norman bishop of that see. He died in 1098.

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